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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9706  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2858  
RUCNTXD/AMEMBASSY MAJURO PRIORITY 0074  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 3896  
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 0181  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5262  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2075  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4784  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2314  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2915  
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1011  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001486

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/ANP, DRL, DRL/AWH  
NSC FOR E.PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/05/2018

TAGS: PGOV PINS KISL ID

SUBJECT: PAPUANS TAKE TO THE STREETS IN LARGE, PEACEFUL  
PROTEST

REF: JAKARTA 105

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Approximately 3,000 Papuans gathered August 4 to protest the adoption of Sharia laws in some parts of Indonesia and the slow implementation of Papua's Special Autonomy Law. The protest--large by Papua standards--reflected simmering tensions and strained relations between (mainly Christian) Papuans and (mostly Muslim) migrants from other parts of Indonesia. It also highlighted Papuans' continued resentment over the region's underdevelopment. END SUMMARY.

RALLY IN JAYAPURA

¶2. (SBU) There has been a large rally in Papua Province in eastern Indonesia. Roughly 3,000 Papuans converged on the Governor's office in Jayapura, the provincial capital, on the morning of August 4 to protest the adoption of Sharia law in some parts of Indonesia and the lagging implementation of Papua's Special Autonomy Law. The group presented a statement of their concerns to mid-level provincial officials as both the Governor and vice Governor were traveling. (Note: Governor Suebu is currently attending an international HIV/AIDS conference in Mexico City. He will then travel to Phoenix to meet officials of Freeport-McMoRan, the U.S. company that operates a massive gold and copper mine in Papua.) The group then moved to the provincial legislature (DPR-P) where they remained until late afternoon. The protest was peaceful, with security forces allowing it to take place without hindrance.

¶3. (SBU) The Forum of Papuan Christians, a newly formed coalition of mostly evangelical Protestant churches, organized the protest. (Note: The total population of Papua and West Papua provinces is approximately 2.5 million. Of these, the vast majority are Christian, mostly Protestant, and about a quarter are Muslim. Virtually all the Muslims are migrants from other parts of Indonesia.) Many Papuans

were drawn to the protest because of a spurious rumor, widely circulated in Papua, that the Indonesian government was on the verge of changing the calendar to make Thursday and Friday the official weekend and make Sunday a working day. Some protesters carried crosses while others said held banners saying "Papua Pancasila Yes, Papua Sharia No." (Note: Pancasila is the official Indonesian state ideology, which is secular-oriented.)

¶4. (SBU) The demonstration also tapped into long-standing Papuan grievances over the slow implementation of the province's Special Autonomy Law. Protesters complained that although the law was enacted in 2001, Papuans have yet to see any tangible benefits. They specifically pointed to the failure of the provincial government to deliver on its ambitious development agenda. Protesters pointed to the fact that while significant funds have been transferred to the provincial government under Special Autonomy, the province lags behind the rest of the country in most development indicators, although it is a resource rich area.

#### NOT ALL ON THE SAME PAGE OF SCRIPTURE

¶5. (C) Some Christian groups--particularly the Catholic Church--distanced themselves from the protest. Jayapura-based Catholic theology professor Neles Tebay told poloff that many in the diocese were wary of some of the "militant" evangelical Protestant groups that organized the demonstration. He said Jayapura Catholic Bishop Leo Ladjar had told Catholics to feel free to participate in the demonstration on their own but the Church did not endorse it. Very few Catholics participated, according to Tebay.

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¶6. (C) Evangelical Protestant leaders sounded a more alarmist note about what they consider the increasing "Islamization" of Papua. Pastor Socrates Yoman told poloff that Papuan Christians felt "under siege" from increasing numbers of Muslim migrants from other parts of Indonesia. He alleged a covert plot involving hard-line Muslim groups and their allies in the government and military to bring more Muslims to Papua. He said Christians were committed to keeping Papua "a Christian land."

#### INCREASING SECTARIAN TENSIONS?

¶7. (C) The demonstration reflects simmering Christian-Muslim tensions that mirror the tensions dividing indigenous Papuans from migrants from other parts of Indonesia. Relations between the two groups have been strained over a number of issues, including the proposal to enact Bible-based laws in Manokwari, the capital of West Papua province. Protestant groups there claimed the law--which has not yet been adopted--was an appropriate response to Sharia laws in other parts of Indonesia (see reftel). Differences between Catholic and Protestant groups over the demonstration also revealed tensions among Papuan Christians.

¶8. (C) Religious issues aside, Papua remains restive. The province's chronic underdevelopment and long-standing political grievances against the central government--including over the slow implementation of Special Autonomy--have left many Papuans angry and resentful. The central and provincial governments say they recognize that there is a problem and that they are working to remedy it.

HUME